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'THE WAGES OF SIN'

AND

'EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.'

THE WAGES OF SIN

AND

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

BY

W. T. BERGER.

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'THE WAGES OF SIN'

AND

'EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.'

INTRODUCTORY.

In the year 1833, at the age of nineteen, God in His mercy drew me with the cords of His love from a life of sin and wickedness to Himself. This is mentioned to show that the writer is not a recent convert.

Until the year 1870, or for the first thirty seven years of my Christian life, I maintained and enforced the popular view of the unending torment of those who die impenitent, and of there being no possibility of repentance after death. During the last fifteen years of earnest study and prayer, this doctrine has become more and more unten-

able in my estimation, and whilst some few highly esteemed and loved friends counselled me (years ago) not to publish my views, many have urged me to do so, as a duty.

The novelty and excitement incident to such a radical changing of opinion justified my hesitation to avow it publicly. It now presses upon me that before I go hence, it is right for me to declare and publish what I think is in keeping with the Word of God upon this subject. A further reason for so doing is the hope of thereby strengthening the hands of the comparatively few, who, like myself, have been compelled to abandon the popular view; the number of whom, thank God, is fast increasing; and if Christians would but give the question a thorough and unprejudiced examination, I am persuaded conversions would soon be multiplied many fold. 'The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way.'[1] May we approach the subject in this spirit.

By the year 1876 the subject had developed considerably in my mind; and having pro-

[1] Psa. xxv. 9.

mised a friend to write out some of my reasons for hoping that sin and rebellion against God will not continue absolutely without end, the following letter (slightly modified only) was penned. The Authorized Version was employed in this letter.

'*I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.*'[1]

'*I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before Me, and the souls which I have made. . . I have seen his ways, and will heal him.*'[2]

[1] Isa. xlvi. 9.

[2] Isa. lvii. 16.

LETTER I.

BOURNEMOUTH, *March* 20, 1876.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

It would be difficult to express my feelings in attempting to fulfil the promise of writing to you in respect to the hope I entertain of the final well-being of the children of men; and consequently my very grave doubts of the correctness of the common opinion, that all who die unconverted, without exception will pass into a state of (literally) unending pain or torment.

A more momentous subject can scarcely be conceived of, and I earnestly pray God to keep and guide me in writing upon it.

The wages or penalty of sin, as well as the gracious salvation provided by God, will assuredly be found to occupy a very large place in the Bible; and I am sure we both

deprecate the idea of attempting to establish our opinions upon a few isolated passages of Scripture.

Whilst the final well-being of men might to advantage be more or less dimly revealed, it could scarcely be so in respect to the supposed unending torment of the wicked. For man to endure unending pain (characterized by fire) is a doctrine so awful to contemplate, that it is reasonable to conclude it would be revealed to man from the beginning, and *so* revealed that he could by no possibility misapprehend the consequences of sinning against his Maker; and we might expect to find the terrible sentence reiterated from time to time throughout the Scriptures, especially upon occasions of aggravated sin and wickedness.

That Adam's sin was the *Sin of Sins*, if we may so express it, must be admitted. By him 'sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'[1] Made in the image of his Maker; no sin in his nature,

[1] Rom. v. 12.

no proclivity to sin; no sinful surroundings, no want unsupplied; harmony and peace ruling in Eden—yet Adam disobeyed the solemn command of his Maker.

And the wages or penalty of sin on the part of Adam, we must suppose would be the *penalty of penalties.* Yet neither before he sinned, nor afterwards, is there expressed in the narrative of Scripture the remotest hint of unending torment being the consequence of his sin, if unrepented of.

This silence at such a juncture, and under such circumstances, is to my mind most significant and weighty.

The commandment of God, and the penalty that should follow the breach of it, could scarcely be more simply expressed than it is in Gen. ii. 16, 17: 'And the Lord commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' And Gen. iii. 16-19 inclusive: 'Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow

and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'

May I ask you to peruse carefully the third chapter of Genesis, noticing how that, whilst God cursed the serpent, He did not curse Adam or Eve, but put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between his seed and the seed of the woman, declaring that her seed should bruise his head, whilst he should bruise only the heel of the seed of the woman? That *the person* who was to bruise Satan's head was Christ, we cannot

doubt; but I take it that the enmity was to be between Satan and his seed, and the woman and her seed; and so the declaration that the *heel only* of the seed of the woman should be bruised seems clear, and would not comport with unending torment; nor do the remaining verses of the chapter convey the sentiment of the awful judgment under consideration.

In chapter iv. we have the history of Cain, the first murderer; a crime of deeper dye could scarcely be imagined, and yet Scripture is silent upon the judgment being unending woe if he did not repent.

When the children of men had reached the climax of wickedness, so that God repented having made man, and destroyed him from off the earth, excepting Noah and his family, Scripture is silent as to unending misery after death being their lot. Dreadful as was the judgment of the Flood in its consequences upon the children of men, it utterly pales and sinks into insignificance when compared with the opinion that all those so dying passed irremediably into unending torment.

I ask you, my dear brother, whether it is possible to account for such silence, preserved, too, throughout the Old Testament, if the orthodox view be the true one? Will you prayerfully read Gen. vi., vii., and viii., and notice what we may call the lament of God, declaring that He would not again curse the ground for man's sake, nor again smite every living thing as He had done; but not a word is recorded concerning the supposed awful unending doom of those lost ones. If Jehovah lamented the lesser evil, we cannot conceive His not lamenting the infinitely greater one, and not even referring to it, if it had been true.

In the ninth chapter 'God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.' See also verses 7-17, where a solemn covenant is entered upon by God between Himself and the children of men. Holding the popular view of the great majority being irremediably lost, the command to those born in sin, and shapen in iniquity to be fruitful and multiply, is past comprehension.

Before proceeding further, let me say that I hope you will not meet me, as I have been met by several, with 'Why cannot you give up reasoning, and accept by faith the Scripture statements as they are?' My reply is, that God would not have us as the horse or mule; for having given us the faculty of reason or understanding, He holds us accountable for the use we make of it: 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.'[1] 'Take heed how ye hear,'[2] and 'what ye hear.'[3] And our Lord appealed to the reason of His hearers: 'If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.'[4] Again, 'Paul for three days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.'[5] 'And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath;'[6] and exhorted the Thessalonians 'to prove all things.'[7] 'The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily,

[1] Isa. i. 18. [2] Luke viii. 18. [3] Mark iv. 24.
[4] John x. 37, 38. [5] Acts xvii. 2. [6] Acts xviii. 4.
[7] 1 Thess. v. 21.

whether those things were so,'[1] and were commended for so doing.

You propound, as *an article of the faith*, the unending misery and woe of all who die impenitent. My desire is to reason with you out of the Scriptures.

After five to six years of patient and prayerful consideration of that view, whilst I do not deny it, nor overlook several passages which seem to imply it, I am more and more confirmed in my doubts of its truth—I mean the popular view of unending torment. The burden of proof of course rests with you; and I hope the evidence upon which you base the view will be supplied to me in due course. That you will appeal to my understanding many times ere we conclude our research, we cannot doubt; for it is not the letter of Scripture, but the spirit and meaning of it to which we desire to attain. May we subject our whole soul to God and His Word during this inquiry.

I now turn to the task of putting before you some of the reasons and evidences upon

[1] Acts xvii. 11.

which my hope of the final well-being of men is based.

'God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. . . . On the seventh day God ended His work which He had made, and rested on the seventh day,'[1] etc. The normal state of creation was therefore good; and sin on the part of man was brought about through the agency and temptation of Satan; hence the judgment pronounced upon him is greater than that upon our first parents, as already referred to. That the abnormal state shall not be perpetuated, is what I think Scripture indicates in many places.

Regarding sin as hateful in God's sight, and utterly antagonistic to His nature, we may expect to find Him working against it for its overthrow and extirpation. Accordingly we read, 'For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.'[2] The chief work of the devil surely has been, and is still, the alienation of men's hearts from their Maker.

[1] Gen. i. 31 : ii. 2. [2] 1 John iii. 8.

If men continue throughout eternity in sin and rebellion against God, I see not how the Son of God will have destroyed the works of the devil.

How early did God hold out the hope of blessing through redemption;[1] how this hope was large, we may say universal, see Gen. xii. 3, 'In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed;' which promise Peter quoted, 'In thy seed shall all the kindreds (or families) of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities;'[2] and Abraham, 'the heir of the world,'[3] is 'the father of us all.'

We have a remarkable statement by the prophet Isaiah, 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto

[1] Gen. iii. 21. [2] Acts iii. 25, 26.
[3] Rom. iv. 13, 16.

Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come; and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.'[1]

This Scripture appears to be referred to by the Apostle when writing to the Philippians, 'Wherefore also God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that *in* (ἐν) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things (intelligent creatures) in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'[2] This surely will be by the Spirit, for 'no man can say (or confess) that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost.'[3] See also Rev. v. 13, the apparent fulfilment of the prophecy: 'And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,

[1] Isa. xlv. 22-25. [2] Phil. ii. 9-11. [3] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.' See also Rom. viii. 21-23, where, I think, all men are included: 'The creature (creation) itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.' This includes the children of men, for 'not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.'

God, who is Love, has designed to save the world—as Scripture seems to teach, see John iii. 17: 'For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.' 'For we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.'[1] 'For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.'[2] 'For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that

[1] John iv. 42. [2] John xii. 47.

which was lost.'[1] 'And we have seen, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.'[2] 'Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.'[3]

And for this purpose God gave His Son, the sin of rejecting Whom in this world involves judgment and punishment of the sorest kind: but will not, let us hope, thwart the good pleasure of His will; of the blessing being carried out, even if it should be in the worlds to come. For this end Jesus came as 'The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;'[4] 'and tasted death for every man,'[5] became 'the propitiation for the sins of the whole world,'[6] 'is the one mediator between God and men,'[7] 'Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,'[8] became our Kinsman and Redeemer, paid the

[1] Luke xix. 10.
[2] 1 John iv. 14.
[3] 1 Tim. ii. 4, 5.
[4] John i. 29.
[5] Heb. ii. 9.
[6] 1 John ii. 2.
[7] 1 Tim. ii. 5.
[8] 1 Tim. ii. 6.

price of redeeming us and our inheritance, and is declared to be 'The Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.'[1] Who 'came to seek and to save that which was lost,'[2] 'or perished,' *i.e.*, all men!

Can He, will He, fail in His mission? 'God is not the God of the dead;'[3] He is the Living, self-existing One; death is foreign to Him. He is able to quicken the dead, hence the hope that Abraham and all God's offspring shall be raised in due time. '*To this end* Christ both died and rose, and revived, THAT He might be the Lord both of the dead and of the living;'[4] and 'hath the keys of hell and of death.'[5] How surely then shall He set free and make alive those for whom He travailed and died, and rose again, and is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high, pleading the merits of His death. 'He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied;'[6] 'and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.'[7] 'The

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 10. [2] Luke xix. 10. [3] Matt. xxii. 32.
[4] Rom, xiv. 9. [5] Rev. i. 18.
[6] Isa. liii. 11. [7] John xii. 32.

Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand.'[1] 'And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.'[2]

Again, 'Jesus is the head of every man.'[3] He espoused humanity, 'was made flesh,'[4] was the Representative of our race, 'Emmanuel, God with us;'[5] and *as* all the children of men were in the first Adam, and died in him, *so* Scripture teaches, I think, all were in Christ the second Adam, and shall be made alive in Him. '*As* in Adam all die, *so* in Christ shall all be made alive.'[6] '*As* by the one man's disobedience the many (οἱ πόλλοι) were made sinners, *so* by the obedience of the one SHALL THE MANY be made righteous.' (Rom. v. 19; see the whole context.)

Jesus then being 'the first-born of every creature;'[7] 'the appointed heir of all things;'[8]

[1] John iii. 35. [2] John vi. 39. [3] 1 Cor. xi. 3.
[4] John i. 14. [5] Matt. i. 23. [6] 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[7] Col. i. 15. [8] Heb. i. 2.

'all things having been put into His hands;'[1] 'the head of the human family;'[2] our kinsman Who 'made peace through the blood of His Cross,'[3] and having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself—is there not every hope that in other worlds God will open the eyes and hearts of the children of men who die impenitent, even as He opened the heart of Lydia and others of old?

We must not forget that 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;'[4] 'who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'[5]

That God is *able* to change the greatest sinner upon earth or in hell, no one doubts for a moment, for all things are possible to Him.

It is a question then of His being *willing* to do so. Of this it is written, 'God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth,'[6]

[1] John iii. 35. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 3, and 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[3] Col. i. 20. [4] Rom. ix. 16.
[5] John i. 13. [6] 1 Tim. ii. 16.

etc., and 'is long suffering to us-ward, not *willing* that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'[1]

That few are saved in this life seems plainly implied in Matt. vii. 14, 'Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

That the great majority of the human family die impenitent and 'perish' is generally believed by Christians; and I think so myself; but I hope in God, Who is able to raise the dead, and fulfil all His Word.

We all were *lost* ones, or *perished* once; but God has had mercy on many of us: and I do not see it revealed that He will not save the 'lost' or 'perished' ones in the worlds to come. 'He *will have* all men to be saved;'[2] and 'He doeth according to His will, and none can stay His hand.'[3] God's enemy shall not eventually triumph by the children of men being kept captive in sin and rebellion, for His works are to be destroyed.

Nor can I bring myself (in the light of Scripture teaching) to think that God *will*

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 9. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 4. [3] Dan. iv. 35.

not make all His *offspring* (see Acts xvii. 29) willing in the day of His power.

'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him;'[1] and if we, being evil, cannot find it in our hearts not to forgive our direst enemy rather than he should be consigned to unending torment, how much more shall not God, 'Whose tender mercies are over all His works,' and 'Whose compassions fail not,' forgive and change His sinful children or creatures and restore them to His favour?

I have already referred to several Scriptures pointing in the direction of restoration, and they can be multiplied. So we read, Acts iii. 21, 'Whom the heaven must receive until the time of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the Fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me;

[1] Luke xi. 13.

Him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever He shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from His iniquities.'

At this juncture, however, I will ask you to consider the purport of 1 Peter iii. 19, 20: 'By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.' 'For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be

judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.'[1] From which passages we may gather that there was a ministry to some after death. But had we not such passages, the promises of God should lead us to hope that sin and death will not be unending, that a kingdom of darkness, of sin, rebellion and woe will not be eternally concurrent with the kingdom of light, of love, and blessedness; for *then* would God be the God of the dead, and our Saviour, though Lord of both dead and living, and possessing the keys of death and hell, would liberate only some of the dead; whereas Scripture teaches us that 'He hath destroyed death and him that hath the power of death;' *then* He will not have 'reconciled all things unto Himself;' *then* 'all things' will not have been 'subjected to Him,' and God will not have become 'all in all,' but the work of the devil will have triumphed and become perpetuated for ever and ever.

You cannot wonder that I hope in God on

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 6.

the behalf of the human family. Can we possibly suppose that Jesus, 'Heir of all things,' possessing 'power over all flesh,'[1] will have unendingly, as part of His inheritance, the unchanged wicked, for whom He shed His life's blood to ransom them?

'Little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.'[2] 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'[3] Greater proof of love to the children of men could not be given. 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?'[4] Does not this embrace a new creation, whereby all shall be made willing to turn to the Lord in His own time? The gift of God and the offer of Eternal Life without the bestowal of faith and a new heart to appreciate and embrace the Saviour, sooner or later, would be inexplicable. For our being dead in

[1] John xvii. 2.
[2] 1 John iii. 18.
[3] John iii. 16.
[4] Rom. viii. 32.

trespasses and sins effectually closes our eyes and hearts to spiritual things. Again, God *loves* His offspring, and 'Love worketh no ill.'[1] He laid the iniquities of us all upon Jesus, put away sin, destroyed death, brought in Everlasting Righteousness, offers the salvation without money and without price to all, who, without exception, are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, unregenerate; and yet, according to the popular view, upon their rejection of it, will be consigned to unending torment; the only thing wanting being that they should be changed or born from above. But essential Love (I dare not say it *will not*) does not open their blind eyes and hearts. That they *never* will be opened I cannot say is the teaching of Scripture.

I am writing as in the presence of God, and desire the truth, and only the truth.

Love must work good and conform to its own image the objects of its affection, however tardily, or I fail to comprehend it; and certainly were any sinful mortal finally to withhold the gift of a new heart, (were it in

[1] Rom. xiii. 10.

his power to bestow it,) we should unhesitatingly judge him as lamentably wanting in love, whatever might be his professions.

God is Love! He is able to change the wicked, and He *desires* their salvation.

I need scarcely say how powerfully the subject of election favours the view I am advocating. God shuts up the all in unbelief THAT He may have mercy upon the all. (See Alford upon Rom. xi. 32.)

Allow me to ask: Is there any reason for disallowing the possibility of the punishment being remitted by the Almighty? or of His changing the wicked in hell? I think not! The many Scriptures referred to may lead us to hope it will be so. God can repent in respect to evil He may have pronounced, whilst He will not draw back in regard to the promises of blessing made entirely independent of man's doing or desert.

The Scriptures declare that the 'wages of sin is death'—not eternal or unending. If the penalty of sin were never-ending suffering, it would be difficult to conceive that such suffering could ever terminate, whether

it should be endured by the sinner or his substitute.

The merit of our Lord's sufferings for sin no doubt sufficed to atone for the sins of untold millions or the whole world; but as His sufferings terminated, this becomes a strong argument in favour of the penalty or wages of sin being terminable likewise. I notice this particularly, because a tract by a highly esteemed Christian has again and again been recommended to me, in which he imports the word 'Eternal' before penalty, and yet speaks of the 'Eternal penalties having been discharged.'

Think not, my dear brother, that I am unaware of or ignore the passages which make in favour, or appear to do so, of unending torment—happily they are few that bear directly upon the subject—but I must leave reference to these for my next letter.

I remain,

Ever yours in our Lord,

W. T. BERGER.

LETTER II.

CANNES, *June*, 1886.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Though you declined to reply to my letter of 20th March, 1876, in writing, and as we have not met each other since, you must allow me to address you once more upon the subject of the penalty or 'Wages of Sin,' and the supposed final well-being of all men.

After ten years' further careful and prayerful study, doubt as to the correctness of the general view of the unending torment of the wicked dead, and the impossibility of their ever being brought to the knowledge of the truth after death, is greatly increased in my mind.

'Now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.'[1] Though we see it not yet put away, surely it is in course of being put away; and in the counsels of God it is put away. May we not hope that it will be put away sooner or later, not in part only, but entirely?

[1] Heb. ix. 26.

Let us now refer to some of the Scriptures, which treat of 'Fire,' 'Eternal Fire,' 'Gehenna Fire,' and 'Eternal Punishment.' The Revised Version of the Bible will be used instead of the Authorized Version, as in my former letter.

From the Old Testament we see that fire was sometimes employed by God as a means of punishing and destroying the wicked, and likewise figuratively for judging and purifying.

'The Lord thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.'[1]

'And there came forth fire from before the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.'[2]

'I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.'[3]

'Lest My fury go forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.'[4]

[1] Deut. iv. 24.
[2] Lev. x. 2.
[3] Zech. xiii. 9.
[4] Jer. iv. 4.

'Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction . . . I will make My words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood; it shall devour them . . . But I will not make a full end with you.'[1]

'Behold, Mine anger and My fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched.'[2]

'But if ye will not hearken unto Me to hallow the Sabbath day and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.'[3]

'. . . For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent.'[4]

'When the Lord shall have washed away

[1] Jer. v. 3, 14, 19. [2] Jer. vii. 20.
. xvii. 27. [4] Zeph. iii. 8, 9.

the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.'[1]

'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?'[2]

We have also the following passages in the New Testament:

'Our God is a consuming fire.'[3]

'He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; Whose fan is in His hand . . . but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire.'[4]

'I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled?'[5]

'Every one shall be salted with fire.'[6]

It will be admitted, no doubt, that in the above four passages the term 'fire' is employed figuratively, the meaning of which will be considered presently.

'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whoso-

[1] Isa. iv. 4. [2] Isa. xxxiii. 14. [3] Heb. xii. 29.
[4] Matt. iii. 11, 12. [5] Luke xii. 49. [6] Mark ix. 49.

ever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.' (See margin, 'Greek, Gehenna of fire.')[1]

Before making any remarks upon these words it may be needful to observe, that, 'Jesus seeing the multitudes, went up into the mountain; and when He had sat down, *His disciples* came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying: . . . Ye are the salt of the earth . . . Ye are the light of the world . . . that ye may glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Remembering, then, that our Lord throughout this chapter was instructing His disciples, we will now consider these difficult verses 21, 22.

Our Lord seemed to be drawing attention to the difference between the Law, (which is in the letter,) and the Gospel or Rule of Christ, (which is in the Spirit, and has to do

[1] Matt. v. 21, 22.

with the thoughts and intents of the heart,) so that the being angry with a brother will bring him into danger of the same judgment as that of the murderer—implying that where there is anger, the spirit of murder is in the heart. The law, however, whilst reaching the murderer, was powerless to touch or condemn the angry man; but the difficulty of the passage is not in this. It is rather that, should a disciple call his brother 'Thou fool,' he will come into danger of Gehenna Fire, (commonly believed to represent the Lake of Fire, the second death, where the impenitent are believed to be in torment, from which they can never be delivered.)

Did our Lord intend us to understand that any believer calling his brother, 'Thou fool,' should be awarded with hell-fire, in the sense just mentioned? A further difficulty resulting from this view is, that the severest conceivable punishment would be awarded for a sin, which will be admitted as being far less heinous than that of murder.

'If thy eye causeth thee (*i.e.*, a believer) to

stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.'[1] (Greek, 'Gehenna,' see margin.)

'If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee (believer) to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.'[2] ('Gehenna of fire.')

'And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having thy two hands to go into hell, (margin, 'Gehenna,') into the unquenchable fire; and if thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off: it is good for thee to enter into life halt, rather than having thy two feet to be cast into hell; and if thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good

[1] Matt. v. 29. [2] Matt. xviii. 8, 9.

for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell, ('Gehenna,') where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire.'[1]

Observe first: That the subject-matter in these passages is a believer causing himself to stumble, (or fall into sin,) and what he should do in such case.

Secondly: The consequences of refusing or neglecting to follow the course indicated by our Lord, and the description of the punishment, namely, 'Hell,' (or 'Gehenna,' see margin,) 'Eternal Fire,' 'Hell, into the unquenchable fire,' and 'Hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' Terms used by our Lord interchangeably, and evidently referring to the same place, and to the same condemnation.

The Saviour had called to Him the twelve, (being at the time seated in the house,)[2] and 'saith unto them,' etc. He was not speaking to unbelievers, those who were still in their sins, (as it seems to me,) and

[1] Mark ix. 43-49. [2] Mark ix. 33.

the idea of stumbling is inappropriate to unbelievers, but most appropriate to the twelve, and of course to all believers whom they represented. The cutting off the hand and plucking out the eye is plainly figurative language, not difficult of interpretation; but the terms 'Hell,' (or 'Gehenna,') 'Eternal Fire,' 'Hell, into the unquenchable fire,' and 'Hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,' into which any believer who has stumbled, and refusing or neglecting to do as our Lord commands, will be cast, call for our gravest and most prayerful consideration, as to what the Saviour really meant, and intended us to understand. That He did not mean that a believer should be cast into 'Hell' or 'Eternal Fire,' in the generally accepted sense of these words, we may be quite sure. What then did He mean in using these awful words?

With the greatest diffidence and humility I venture to suggest what seems to me the true interpretation. I think our Lord employed these terms, which no doubt were well understood by the disciples, in reference to

the valley of Hinnom, where the bodies of the sacrifices and of murderers and others were cast, to be devoured by the worms, and finally consumed by the fires, which were kept continually burning with the view of preventing contagion or epidemic; as fitly and vividly figuring the solemn judgment into which His disciples will come who do not judge and correct themselves. This view is strengthened by our Lord's immediately adding, 'For *every one shall be salted with fire*,' and also by what the Apostle wrote, 'We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ that each may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.'[1] And 'each man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be

[1] 2 Cor. v. 10.

saved; yet so as through fire.'[1] 'If we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged. ut when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.'[2] And again, 'To deliver such a one (a believer) unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.'[3] 'Our God is a consuming fire,' and will judge and put away sin wherever it may be found. If we are His children indeed, and walking in the Light, we shall do so likewise: 'Be ye imitators of God, as beloved children.'

I would now like to give an extract from a letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., by the Rev. F. N. Oxenham, M.A., as to the meaning of Gehenna, etc., p. 15: 'These words, however, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," are a quotation from the prophet Isaiah, who uses them with reference to the carcases of the slain lying without the walls of Jerusalem, where, evidently, "the worms" were not "*ever*-lasting," nor the "fire" for "*ever* un-

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 13. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 31. [3] 1 Cor. v. 5.

extinguished." . . . If the common doctrine be true, *then*, of course these and all other of our Lord's words must "be supposed" to agree with it. But the doctrine itself is not *proved to be true*, nor even shown to be probable, by any number of passages which are wrested from their natural meaning and arbitrarily "supposed" to assert it. It is quite certain that in their original use, and in their primary meaning, (in Isa. lxvi. 24,) the "worm" and the "fire" meant instruments of punishment which did not "die," and were "not extinguished," *until* their work was fully done; but when that work was done, the worm did die, and the fire was extinguished. Why should it be "supposed" that our Lord, in using the same words, meant something essentially different?'

Having considered the case of a believer causing himself to stumble or sin, let us now examine that of one believer causing another believer to stumble, as recorded in Matt. xviii. 6, and Mark ix. 42, both passages being in close connection with those just considered above: 'Whoso shall cause one of these

little ones who believe on Me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea;' and 'whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on Me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.' It is not difficult to see that it would be better for a Christian to lose his natural life than to cause his Christian brother to stumble; for should the latter fail to judge and correct himself he would eventually, as we must suppose, be cast into Gehenna fire; that is, I think, he would come into the solemn judgment of Christ; whilst if it were an unbeliever causing the other to stumble, it is impossible to conceive how it could be better for him to lose his life, as he would thereby be cut off from all further opportunities of repentance in this life; his doom would be sealed, being cast into never-ending torment or punishment, according to the common opinion.

Let us now consider the following state-

ments, (the last I propose to examine in the Gospels,) all of which, as also the former ones, fell from the lips of our blessed Lord, and therefore are most sacred. They are connected with the end of this age, and relate (if I am not mistaken) to the judgment of those who will be in external fellowship with the people of God in that day, but will be manifested as wicked ones and hypocrites, then and there, to be consigned by our Lord to destruction. Matt. viii. 11, 12: 'I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.' (See also chapter xxv. 30.) The context of each passage shows both the time and character of those cast out. But we must pass on and give full consideration to chapters xiii. 40 and xxv. 31 to end.

First: 'So shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of

His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear.'[1] 'So shall it be in the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.'[2] Our Lord was here giving to His disciples the *interpretation* of the parables 'The Tares and the Wheat,' and 'The Net;' we have therefore simply to accept the explanation as it stands, the substance of which is, that our Lord at the end of this world will cast the living wicked ones (hypocrites) out of His kingdom into the furnace of fire—*i.e.*, they will be destroyed by literal fire—to wait the general resurrection and judgment of the dead. Nor is there any difficulty in believing this, seeing there are so many cases in Scripture of the wicked having

[1] Matt. xiii. 40. [2] Matt. xiii. 49.

been destroyed, as to their natural lives, by fire, and likewise that 'the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire,'[1] etc., when in all probability the living wicked will also be destroyed by the same fire in that day.

Lastly: 'When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all the nations; and He shall separate them one from another as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; . . and these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'[2] The

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 7. [2] Matt. xxv. 31-46.

similarity of this narrative to that of 'The Tares and Wheat,' and 'The Net,' cannot fail to be observed. The same epoch; the judging and destroying the living wicked ones associated with the true people of God, (as indicated by the sheep and goats,) and the same means employed for their destruction, namely, Fire, described however as 'Eternal fire' in this chapter. It should be noticed that the living nations only are stated as gathered before the Lord, there being no mention of the dead or the resurrection; and with the exception of the words 'sheep and goats,' the language appears to be literal; and as 'fire' was stated by our Lord in the interpretation of the parable of the Tares and Wheat as the mode of destruction, are we not bound to consider the 'Eternal fire' in the passage under consideration as being also literal? And may we not also conclude that our Lord intended us to understand 'the furnace of fire,' 'the Eternal fire,' and 'Eternal punishment,' as meaning the same punishment? Now, as the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and their wicked inhabitants were destroyed

by the 'Eternal fire,' for so is their punishment distinctly called, see Jude 7, though the fire went out as soon as their destruction was complete, must we not suppose that those to be destroyed by the 'Eternal fire,' in the passage under consideration, will likewise pass into Hades to wait the general resurrection, suffering their 'Eternal punishment'?

And as 'Eternal redemption' does not mean eternal *redeeming*, so we must not think that 'Eternal punishment' means necessarily eternal *punishing*. The loss in blessing to those who will be thus punished will be irreversible and unending. But may they not nevertheless be brought to the knowledge of the truth and to the Saviour in other ages?

Allow me to quote again from the Rev. F. N. Oxenham, (page 68) in respect to the word, αἰώνιος: 'Dr. Pusey would argue, αἰώνιος certainly means "endless" in the second clause,' (Mr. O. is referring to the forty-sixth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew,) 'therefore it must mean "endless" in the first; but it might be argued on the other hand, with at least equal reason

and force, αἰώνιος cannot mean "endless" in the first clause, therefore it must not be pressed to mean "endless" in the second. No doubt you cannot in any fairness force the word to mean more or less in one clause than it does in the other; and therefore the *minimum* of necessary significance is all that you have any right to insist upon in either clause. The word might mean more; the statement might be quite true if the word did mean more in one clause, or in both. But we are not concerned with what the statement might mean, but only with what it must mean; and therefore since αἰώνιος does not always mean "endless," you have no right to insist that it shall bear that meaning in either of the above clauses, however plain it may be that that meaning would be very proper and true in one of them. . . . I believe the endlessness of that joy (of heaven) as much as Dr. Pusey does, but I do not ground my belief on the forced interpretation of this or any other particular text. I believe in the endlessness of joy and goodness, because that belief is in full accord with the revealed

character and the known will and purpose of God. I disbelieve the endlessness of misery and wickedness, because that belief is (to my mind at least) irreconcilably contrary to all that we know of God's will, purpose, and nature.'

Again, from the same author, (pp. 6-8) 'There is another factor in this doctrine (Everlasting Punishment) very generally received, viz., that the great majority of mankind will be lost, a small minority only saved. It certainly seems difficult, on the face of such a statement as that in St. Matthew's Gospel,[1] to deny on Scriptural grounds the doctrine that "the lost" (whatever that term may mean) will be "many," and the "saved" "few."

'Now this statement is difficult to believe, because it seems at least *to imply* . . . that good will never fully overcome evil and destroy it, but that good and evil will be alike everlasting. That God will never fully and finally subdue or reconcile His enemies, but that His enemies and Himself will be

[1] Matt. vii. 13, 14.

eternal together. And, further, if this be true that the Almighty and All-merciful lacks either *the power*, or the *will*, to save His creatures from misery,—not sorrow or suffering, temporary, corrective, purgatorial, didactic, refining, or serving *any other* conceivable ultimate purpose of mercy to the sufferer, or to anyone else, —but misery utterly fruitless for good to *the sufferer*, because it will be endless; utterly useless to *all others*, because their unalterable lot in happiness or in woe will be already fixed.'

If we admit they are 'lost' in this world, but will be saved in another, the difficulty will exist no longer.

But I must now consider other Scriptures: 'He also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of His anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name.'[1]

[1] Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

'And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. For God did put in their hearts to do His mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished.'[1] 'And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image; they twain were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone.'[2] 'And they went up over the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.'[3] Then follows the descrip-

[1] Rev. xvii. 16, 17. [2] Rev. xix. 20.
[3] Rev. xx. 9, 10.

tion of the great white throne, and the judgment of the raised dead; 'And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.'[1] How thankful we ought to be that the lake of fire is declared to be 'death,' 'the second death;' that 'death' is declared to be an 'enemy,' and that every enemy shall be destroyed. The first death is evidently not the 'last enemy,' for it is to be destroyed by being cast into the 'lake of fire, which is the second death,' into which the devil, the beast, and the false prophet will have been previously cast. What this dying, or the second death, may be, is not revealed; but should it result in men dying unto sin, and being quickened and made alive unto God, how wondrously would the will of God, that all men shall be saved, have been accomplished, for 'He doth not afflict nor grieve willingly the children of men.'

'They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever':[2] (in margin of Revised Version, 'Unto the ages of the ages.') The

[1] Rev. xx. 15. [2] Rev. xx. 10.

ages, being periods of time, must necessarily have an ending. 'Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ENDS of the ages are come.'[1] 'The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.'[2] (Margin, Greek, 'Unto the ages of the ages.') Yet it is written in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 'Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, TILL He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. For He put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted who did subject all things unto Him. And when all things have been subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all.'

[1] 1 Cor. x. 11. [2] Rev. xi. 15.

It may be advanced that the destruction of Death will be accomplished at the first Resurrection. It will be a partial fulfilment of the promise no doubt, similar to the fulfilment of the promise in Joel on the day of Pentecost, whilst its final or complete fulfilment is still future.

The life of Adam may be said to have been two-fold—natural and spiritual. When he sinned he died and forfeited both his natural and his spiritual life. And the redemption wrought by our Lord extends to Adam, both as regards his natural and his spiritual life.

Now, if man repents and turns to God in this life, the dying to sin and the quickening of the Holy Spirit into spiritual life *precedes* the quickening or redeeming of his body; whilst those who reject God's goodness in this life and die in their sins, will, I conceive, be redeemed as regards their bodies first, and will come forth from their graves in spirit bodies, whilst their dying to sin, and the quickening into spiritual life, will follow afterwards; (*i.e.*, as I think, and have already

intimated;) otherwise, their redemption will be incomplete.

Death also is twofold. The first death, and the second death; and both are inimical to man; yet both have been appointed of God: the second death, the lake of fire, being unspeakably the greater foe. The righteous will have no part in the second death, as their complete redemption will take place at the resurrection of their bodies as already shown.

Sin may reign unto death in the lake of fire; but not for ever; for '*where* sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'[1] No, blessed be God, a greater than sin has espoused the cause of humanity, has paid the price of man's redemption from the curse; and will destroy this last enemy. So long as sin and death have power and reign over the children of men, all enemies cannot be said to have been destroyed and put under

[1] Rom. v. 20, 21.

the feet of Christ; all rule, and all authority and power, (adverse, of course, to man,) cannot be said to have been abolished.

Redemption is universal, the price of which was paid for each and all. Who shall hinder its being carried out in its fulness? Shall the sinful will of man prove stronger than the will of God? Believer, I ask you solemnly, were you willing of yourself to come to God? Were you born again of your own will? or was it not of the will and power of God that you became willing and were saved? I make this remark, because so many urge that the wicked love sin and persist in it, and will do so throughout eternity; and they think this answers all difficulties. I admit the truth of the assertion as far as man is concerned, but reply: He who hath said, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,' hath likewise declared: 'God will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;' but He does not say in this world, or when. I believe God, and therefore wait the fulfilling of His will or pleasure. And the Saviour has declared He will draw all

men unto Him, if He be lifted up upon the Cross. He does not say, however, He will do so in this world. I believe in Him Who cannot lie nor fail, and have the unspeakable joy in the bright prospect of seeing sin put away in its entirety—root and branch.

Having already referred at some length to the subject of Resurrection, it may be well to resume the research. 'But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.'[1] 'But I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets: having

[1] Acts xxiii. 6-9.

hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection, both of the just and unjust.'[1]

'And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain.'[2]

Thus the promise of the resurrection both of the just and unjust is clearly declared and looked for as *a hope* by the Apostle, as it was likewise by the twelve tribes. And from the tenor of these statements, it would be difficult to suppose the Apostle considered the resurrection of the unjust would only be for the purpose of their being judged and cast into the lake of fire to suffer *unending* misery; far better they should never be raised.

We turn now to 1 Cor. xv. 3. The Apostle declares that 'Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures;

[1] Acts xxiv. 14. [2] Acts xxvi. 6.

and that He appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once; . . . then He appeared to James; then to all the Apostles; last of all . . . He appeared to me also.'

Having thus established the fundamental truth of the resurrection, he proceeds to expose and refute the Sadducean error of denying the resurrection, and the after or spirit world.

'Now if Christ is preached that He hath been raised from the dead, (ἐκ νεκρῶν,) how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? (*i.e.*, in the abstract νεκρῶν.) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, (νεκρῶν,) neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain; your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we witnessed of God that He raised up Christ, Whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your

sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.'[1]

This last declaration of the Apostle is proof that He had not been speaking exclusively of the resurrection of believers. 'But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep':[2] (the first-born *out of*, or *from among* the dead—ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν—see the Greek, Col. i. 18.) Observe, it is not here added 'in Christ;' but simply 'them that are asleep.' 'For since by man (came) death, by man (came) also the resurrection of the dead. (νεκρῶν.) For as in (*the*, see Greek,) Adam all die; so also in (*the*, see margin,) Christ shall all be made alive.' I have never been able to accept the transposing of the word 'all' as made by many,—namely, So also all in Christ shall be made alive,—thereby limiting the promise to believers. This is not a point of small moment—far otherwise; for if it be, as I think, and as it is given in the Revised and Authorized Versions, 'As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive,' (*i.e.*, the all that are in the

[1] 1 Cor, xv. 12. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 20.

Adam;) then it follows that the all, out from amongst whom Christ the firstfruit has been raised, will be made like Him; for 'if the firstfruit is holy, so is the lump.' And the passages, 'The Church of the first-born ones;' 'a kind of firstfruits of His creatures;' and 'being firstfruits unto God and the Lamb,' confirm this view.

It is beyond question that the wicked will be raised sooner or later by our Lord Jesus Christ. 'The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment.'[1] 'But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, (the first-born from the dead;) then (or next in order) they which are Christ's at His coming, (*i.e.*, the first Resurrection;) then (or next in order) the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For

[1] John v. 28, 29; see also Rev. xx. 13, Dan. xii. 2, and Mark xii. 25.

He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.'[1] The end, (probably of considerable duration,) therefore, will embrace the second or general resurrection of those believers who will die during the millenium, and whose names will be found written in the book of life; and also of the wicked dead, who will be judged and cast into the lake of fire—the second death—and finally the destruction of death.

'But some will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?' etc. . . 'So also is the resurrection of the dead. (*τῶν νεκρῶν.*) It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (? a spirit-body.) So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit.'[2] In raising the dead our Lord does

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 23, 27. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 35-46.

not give a body of flesh and blood; for 'they are or will be as the angels.' Thus we see, as I have already intimated, the redemption, purchased by our Lord for all, carried out towards all as regards the body; and as death, and all rule and authority and power, are to be abolished, we are shut up (as it seems to me) to hope that the wicked will, in God's time and way, be delivered from the dominion of sin, by the renewing of their moral natures, and be brought to the knowledge and love of the truth: otherwise their redemption will be partial or incomplete.

Scripture nowhere affirms that those dying impenitent, on account of their love of sin, cannot be changed hereafter and delivered from its power; if it did, there would be an end of all controversy. Rather the contrary is plainly, if indirectly, implied as regards some, in 1 Peter iii. 18: 'Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also He (Christ) went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,' etc. Also

chap. iv. 6: 'For unto this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.'

For further confirmation of this hope, we will now consider Rom. v. It is frequently asserted that this chapter sets forth the headship of Adam and Christ—all in Adam by natural birth, and all in Christ by spiritual birth, or by birth of the spirit—whereas the whole argument of the Apostle, as it seems to me, requires the acceptance of the larger headship of Christ. For 'the head of every man is Christ.'[1] 'He is the firstborn of all creation.'[2] So that all things and all men were in Him; 'by Him and for Him were all things made,' (see Authorised Version, Col. i. 16,) and 'His delight was with the sons of men or ever the earth was.'[3] He was 'the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world.'[4]

The chapter therefore (*i.e.* Rom. v.) seems

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 3.
[2] Col. i. 15.
[3] Prov. viii. 31.
[4] Rev. xiii. 8.

to contrast man's love and God's love—evil and good—sin and grace—sin triumphing over all for a time, but grace eventually triumphing over all unto eternal life. The Apostle says, in effect, man's love cannot be compared with the love of God, which is upon all, even His enemies, (those who have no faith and no love,) giving His Son for them, and so reconciling them to Himself, not imputing their trespasses, so that being reconciled they may be (eventually) saved by His life. Now follows the argument, Verse 12: 'Therefore as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned'—(omit the parenthesis for a moment.)—Verse 18: 'So then as through one trespass the judgment came *unto all men* to condemnation; even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came *unto all men* to justification of life. For *as* through the one man's disobedience *the many* (all) were made sinners, even *so* through the obedience of the one shall *the many* (all) be made righteous. And the law came in beside, that the trespass

might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Thus we see that death and judgment came to all to condemnation, and the free gift came to all to justification of life; all were made sinners, and all shall be made righteous. Surely no other construction can justly be put upon the passage.

We will now turn to the parenthesis, verses 13 to 18: 'For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of Him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many (*i.e.* all) died; *much more* did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many; (*i.e.* all;) And not as through one that sinned, so is the gift; for the

judgment came of one unto condemnation, but the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they (*i.e.* the many or all) that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ.'

A few words upon this parenthesis. Adam transgressed the law given to him by God, and was driven out of Eden beyond the reach of the forbidden tree, as also of the tree of life, and no new law was given (as far as is revealed) until the time of Moses, and yet between these epochs death reigned over all, even over those who had not transgressed any expressed or written law. How is this? Because all men were in Adam and came out of him, inheriting his lot and condemnation, possessing his fallen nature, and were from their birth the children of wrath. This headship is a figure of another, extensive as the first, but grand and glorious beyond expression, namely, that of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven—Immanuel, God with us!

'the first-born of all creation' . . . 'in Whom all things consist, (see Col. i. 15 to 19,) 'the head of every man,' and 'who tasted death for every man,' 'the heir of all things.' And because all men and creatures are in Him, they must share with Him in God's time and way His lot, even life and favour for evermore.

Is not the same truth set forth here, as we have seen in the earlier part of this chapter, namely, the two headships, and especially the headship of Christ, and its consequences? There is not a word of man's responsibility to receive God's testimony, the rejection of which will incur his wrath; it is simply the setting forth the purpose and good pleasure of God towards man in consequence of the justification wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of all. And the promise that 'the many or all shall be made righteous' cannot be limited to those that are the elect, (as some say,) for it is said, 'But *where* sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly.' May we not say, the Apostle labours in this chapter to contrast the outcome of the two

Adams, the one being of the earth, the other the Lord from heaven: the issues, sin reigning over all men for a time unto death, (not eternal,) but grace reigning *through righteousness* over all men unto eternal life.

We will now turn to the eighth chapter of Romans for further confirmation upon this subject, though from quite a different point of view. Verse 19: 'For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself, (or margin, 'in hope; because the creation,' etc.) also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together, (margin, 'with us,') until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, the redemption of our body.' Is not the Apostle here proclaiming God as the great architect or potter, Who has subjected

the whole creation to vanity, and Who promises and undertakes to deliver it. The being subjected to vanity was not by the will of the creation, nor is the being delivered from the bondage of corruption by the will of the creation; both are by the will of God: hence the *certainty* of its accomplishment in due time. It has been urged upon me that the creation in this passage does not refer to, nor include, man; but surely the context forbids such conclusion; for the Apostle, after declaring that the 'whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,' adds, 'And not only so, but *ourselves also*, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,' etc. So that it is evident that man, the head of the creation, is included. Am I forcing the language? Can any other construction be fairly put upon it? And if not, what a glorious future is in prospect for our poor fallen world of sinful men. 'The whole creation groaneth,' etc., 'and shall be delivered from the bondage (or dominion) of corruption,' not by the will of man, nor prevented by the will of

man, but by the blessed will of God, through the efficacious work of redemption of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ. Let us cry out, as did the angels of old, when ushering the Saviour into this world: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men, in whom He is well pleased.'

There are a few other passages frequently advanced, which require notice.

It has been again and again suggested to me that unending torment is implied in the words, 'Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?'[1] It would suffice to reply, A doctrine of such momentous consequences must be based upon better foundation than 'implication.' If you will carefully read chapters xxxi., xxxii. and xxxiii. of this prophet, especially verse 9 of chapter xxxi., and from verse 11 to 15 of chapter xxxiii., you will see that such conclusion is not admissible. The words 'everlasting burnings,' no doubt are the chief, if not only, ground of such view; but what I have already written

[1] Isa. xxxiii. 14.

upon the subject of 'everlasting fire' will apply here :

'Who among us can abide this consuming fire?
Who among us can abide these continued burnings?'

This translation, I believe, is by Bishop Lowth.

'And many, (or the many, *i.e.*, all,) of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt,'[1] referring (I judge) to the general resurrection, when the saints who will die during the millenium, and all the wicked dead, will be raised; and if so, the 'everlasting contempt' may be equivalent of the 'second death' or 'lake of fire,' in Rev. xx. 15. At any rate, unending woe or torment is not set forth in this statement.

Need I draw attention to the 'bonds,' or chains of the fallen angels in Jude, seeing they are 'everlasting' only 'unto' (or until) the day of judgment; but what the sentence then will be is not stated. Again, 'Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them,

[1] Dan. xii. 2.

having in like manner with these (the fallen angels) given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment (not eternal) of eternal fire.'[1] This passage, so frequently quoted in favour of unending woe, upon reading Ezek. xvi. 53-55, will be seen not to teach it; for 'I will turn again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters; . . . and thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former estate;' so that the city which was punished and destroyed by 'eternal fire' shall be rebuilt, and the daughters of Sodom shall return to their former estate. The whole chapter will repay the study of it.

The abominations of Jerusalem were worse than those of Sodom, (for which 'God saw good to take them away,' Ezek. xvi. verse 50;) and yet did God not only not threaten Jerusalem with 'eternal fire,' but He has promised to forgive her: (see verse 63) 'that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame,

[1] St. Jude 7.

when I have forgiven thee all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.' Read at least from verse 46 to end of chapter. This is one of the many instances in which judgment is intended by God for the correction and restoration of men. See also, upon this, Psalm lxxxiii. verse 13 to end, 'O my God, make them like the whirling dust; As stubble before the wind. As the fire that burneth the forest, And as the flame that setteth the mountains on fire; So pursue them with Thy tempest, And terrify them with Thy storm. Fill their faces with confusion; THAT they may seek Thy name, O Lord. Let them be ashamed and dismayed for ever; yea, let them be confounded and perish: THAT they may know that Thou alone, whose name is JEHOVAH, Art the most high over all the earth.' Likewise Isa. xxvi. 9, 'For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.' 'Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the peoples labour for the fire,' (Authorized Version, 'in the fire,') 'and the nations weary themselves for vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the know-

ledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'[1] 'In wrath remember mercy.'[2]

As regards 'Dives and Lazarus,'[3] it will suffice to say that it describes a state prior to the Resurrection, and therefore does not apply to the 'second death.' But probably the definition, imputed to Bishop Lowth, is correct: 'A continued narration of a fictitious event, applied by way of simile to the illustration of some important truth.' In any case there is no mention of unending torment.

The sin against the Holy Ghost is relied upon by some as proving the popular doctrine, but as there is no statement to that effect in the passage, we cannot go beyond accepting the declaration as it stands, (whatever it may mean,) nor are we justified in concluding that unforgiven sin is equivalent to unending woe and torment. 'Whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, (margin, 'age,') nor in that which is to come.'[4] Whether it will be forgiven or not

[1] Hab. ii. 14.
[2] Hab. iii. 2.
[3] Luke xvi. 19.
[4] Matt. xii. 32.

in a still later age or world is not stated. How many ages or worlds to come there may be, is not revealed. 'That in the ages to come,' etc., wrote the Apostle Paul to the Ephesians ii. 7. And are we not justified in supposing, that, as the sin against the Holy Ghost, committed in this present age, cannot be forgiven, either in this age or the coming one, other sins committed in this age can be forgiven in the coming one? The force of this suggestion is strengthened when we remember, that our Lord 'went and preached unto the spirits in prison,' etc.; see 1 Peter iii. 18, 19; see also chapter iv. 6, 'For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.'

Let us turn now to 2 Thes. i. 5: 'To the end that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven

with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, *even* eternal destruction from the face of the Lord, and from the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints,' etc. This Scripture unmistakeably refers to the end of this world, (age,) when the Lord Jesus will return to take His people to be with Himself, and to judge the wicked and those who have not obeyed the Gospel. It is very similar to Matt. xiii., where we read that the tares and the wheat are to be allowed to grow together till the end of the world, (age,) when the Son of Man will send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire;—similar, likewise, to Matt. xxv. 31, 'When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him . . . and He shall separate them one from another, etc. . . . Then shall He say to them on the left hand, Depart from me,

ye cursed, into the eternal fire,' etc. In the text before us, 'The angels will go forth in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, (not eternal,) *even* eternal destruction, (whatever that they mean,) from the face of the Lord,' etc., probably in their being consumed by fire at the hands of the angels commissioned for that purpose. But I fail to see unending punishment or torment involved in this passage.

'Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this Book, for the time is at hand. He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still; and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be made holy still. Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is.'[1] Does this need an answer? No one for a moment can suppose that our Lord approves of men continuing in unrighteous-

[1] Rev. xxii. 10.

ness or evil. Is it not judicial, like the passage quoted above from Psalm lxxxiii.? Compare Prov. i. 24, 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh in the day of your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a storm, and your calamity cometh on as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me diligently, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.' And again, 'I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope in your latter end. And ye shall call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you, and ye shall seek me and find me,

when ye shall search for me with all your heart.'[1] Does not this passage, therefore, in Rev. xxii. 10-12, mean that nothing but judgment awaits the persistently wicked in this world, followed as it is by, 'Behold, I come quickly . . . to render to each man according as his work is.'

Lastly, the case of Judas is much relied upon by some. 'Good were it for that man if he had never been born;'[2] words which are supposed to teach the certainty of Judas going into unending torment. But may not these words simply mean, 'Good had he died in his mother's womb: far better than to have been the traitor of our Lord.' Any way, it does not say he will go into unending torment, nor that his sin should not be forgiven. If it were true that Judas will go into unending torment, it would indeed have been good that he had never been born. And with cogency and equal truth could it be said of the untold millions of God's offspring, who (according to the popular view) will suffer torment that will never come to an end, that

[1] Jer. xxix. 11. [2] Matt. xxvi. 24.

it were better they never had been born. But would it not be blasphemy for us to say so, seeing that our All-wise and loving God created them, and for His own pleasure, or of His own will, created He them? (see the Revised Version, Rev. iv. 11.) In the Authorized Version it reads, 'For Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.' Besides, 'He is God, and there is none else . . . My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.'[1] And God's will or pleasure is, 'that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.'[2] Can you, my dear friend, doubt the issue? I frankly confess I cannot. 'Let God be true, but every man a liar.'[3] Difficulties there may be. Abraham had very grave difficulties, but his strong faith glorified God, and God honoured him accordingly. Far be it from God's people to continue maintaining that untold millions of His truly loved offspring, for whose redemption and salvation He gave His Son to the death of

[1] Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. [2] 1 Tim. ii. 4.
[3] Rom. iii. 4.

the Cross, shall be unendingly in rebellion against Him, and shut up in a state of sin and torment from which they can neither escape, nor change, nor be changed, according to the common view.

The subject of Election must not be overlooked in this inquiry. The testimony of Scripture is, (Rom. iii. 10,) 'There is none righteous, no, *not one*; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God,' and down to verse 18.

'All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.'[1]

'No man can come to Me except the Father, which sent Me draw Him:'[2] 'Except it be given unto him of the Father.'[3] 'Ye must be born anew.'[4] 'Ye did not choose me, but I chose you.'[5] But some have sought after God, have been brought to know the Father, by the revealing

[1] Matt. xi. 27. [2] John vi. 44. [3] John vi. 65.
[4] John iii. 7. [5] John xv. 16.

of the Son; have been drawn to the Son; have been born anew of the Spirit; have been chosen of the Saviour. Of all such it is written: 'As many as received Him, to them gave *He* the right to become children of God, (even,) to them that believe on His name, which were born *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,* but of God.'[1] All such, and those who shall believe after them, are the 'first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb;' the few that shall be saved in this present age or world; members of Christ's mystical body, 'the Church;' 'the Elect;' whilst the many who have not been drawn to the Saviour, who have not had the Father revealed to them by the Son, have not been born of the Spirit, have not been chosen by the Saviour, are those who are left by the will of Him, Who, nevertheless, 'will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth;' but the time when it shall be accomplished is not specified. Had it been in this present world there would have been no election, and no saving in the

[1] John i. 12.

worlds to come. Yet 'God is not slack concerning His promise' . . . for one day and a thousand years are alike in His sight. It is important to remember that the 'first fruits' are not the harvest. The first fruits and the later fruits, or general ingathering, together constitute the harvest. The 'first fruits,' showing what the whole field of corn will come to when gathered in, agreeing with that Scripture: 'If the first fruit is holy, so is the lump: and if the root is holy, so are the branches.'[1]

For thirty-seven years was the subject of Election most difficult and incomprehensible to me; though I did not reject or explain it away, for that it holds a large place in Scripture was always evident to my judgment. I simply waited the time when God should be pleased to give me more light upon it, which I think He now has done.

The election of individuals to be children of God is clearly set forth in Rom. ix. 6-17. 'For they are not all Israel which are of Israel: neither because they are Abraham's

[1] Rom. xi. 16.

seed, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed. . . . For the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.' (These last words were written by Malachi some 1200 years or more after the birth of Jacob and Esau, and are given, I conceive, by the Apostle as a proof or verification of the election of Jacob.) 'What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy.'

Can anything be more clear, that being elected is not of man's will, nor of man's

power or worthiness, but entirely of the will of God? It is He Who elects, Who regenerates, Who hath mercy and compassion on whom He sees fit. It is He Who *wills* from first to last; and it will be made manifest in due time, no doubt, that Divine wisdom and love have planned the whole.

It is not necessary to enter upon the question of man's responsibility to God, which I hold. 'Every man shall give an account of himself to God for the deeds done in the body.' Nor need I say anything as to the reprobation of the non-elect, which I never entertained; judging rather election to be a blessing (if in disguise) to the non-elect; though not in this world. 'For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that He might have mercy upon all.'[1] This verse refers (probably) both to the Jew and to the Gentile. From it, however, we see that mercy will be extended to the non-elect in the end. 'When the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, all Israel shall be saved.' —Study the whole chapter. May we not hope similarly, that, as God is now showing

[1] Rom. xi. 32.

mercy to whom He will, in electing them, so in another age He will show mercy unto all,—even the non-elect in this world,—for 'all (alike) are shut up unto disobedience that He might have mercy upon all.'

The gifts and calling of God are not for our own profit alone, but for the profit of others. Abraham was the chosen of God, and the promise of personal blessing was great and glorious. 'I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and be thou a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse.' And then notice that others were to share His blessing, for it is added, 'And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed,' which promise the Apostle Peter quoted, (see Acts iii. 25, 26,) adding: 'Unto you first, God, having raised up His Servant, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.' Thus do we see the nature of the blessing which shall come to all the families of the earth through Abraham. This promise, though unfulfilled

at present, shall it evermore remain so? Answer. 'For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us.'[1] Again, 'Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my Son, my first-born,'[2] and 'Mine elect.'[3] 'Israel was holiness unto the Lord: the *first fruits* of His increase;'[4] so that if obedient to the voice of the Lord, they should be a peculiar treasure unto Him from among all peoples, and thus through their instrumentality all other nations should be blessed. 'If the first fruit be holy, so is the lump,' out of which they are taken.

In what I have advanced, I have not dwelt so much upon the penalty of sin, as I could have desired; therefore, before bringing this paper to a close, let me remark:

i. It will not be denied that the wages of sin, on behalf of those who are saved, was endured by our Lord Jesus Christ; nor that

[1] 2 Cor. i. 20.
[2] Exod. iv. 22.
[3] Isa. xlv. 4, A.V.
[4] Jer. ii. 3.

the sacrifice was of infinite value. Neither will it be disallowed that our Saviour's sufferings for sin terminated on the Cross.

ii. This, therefore is strong presumptive evidence that the wages of sin is not, and never was, absolutely unending suffering, as noted before.

iii. That our Lord put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, is plainly declared in Scripture; as also that He, the Just One, died for (in the place of) the unjust ones; that (in order that) the unjust ones might be brought to God, having given Himself a ransom for all.

iv. So that the Divine Justice having been perfectly satisfied on behalf of all men, God's judgments and punishments are intended, I conceive, for their good and restoration: for justice can neither require nor accept the wages or penalty being endured a second time.

It will be admitted that God loves all His creatures, providing for their wants, making life joyous to them, and to be desired; and

this love is more manifest since the fall of Adam than before, because of man's redemption. Of course, if redemption is not on behalf of all, then for those to whom it is not extended, nor intended, life cannot be considered a boon; for the issues of it, of necessity must be blackness and darkness for ever; as they can never attain to righteousness of themselves, or by their own good works; of whom it might be truly said,—Better were it that they never had been born.

But they have been born, and they are redeemed in purpose, for the sin of Adam has been more than compensated and counteracted by 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,' and they are commanded by God to 'be fruitful and multiply.'

As some may consider the description of the judgment and sufferings of those in the lake of fire, forbids all possible hope of their ever being delivered, may I remind them of the sorrows, sicknesses, pains, and judgments, endured by many of the children of God in this life, and of the loss, and perhaps shame likewise, which will be incurred by some of

them after death, (not the penalty surely, but the consequence of sin, and being part of the training and discipline necessary to make them partakers of God's holiness,) when they will find it less difficult to admit the need of the impenitent passing through similar sufferings both before and after death, (not excluding the lake of fire,) in order that they may be brought to realize the misery and awful consequences of sin, and be led, in another age, to appreciate the Gospel, and thus come to the knowledge of the truth.

Scripture proof may be asked in respect to the 'judgment, shame, and loss,' of the Christian, referred to above. As briefly as possible it shall be supplied. 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord;' 'To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;' 'If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off and cast it from thee; it is good for thee to enter into life maimed and halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into eternal fire.'[1]

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 32, and v. 5, and Matt. xviii. 8.

These words were addressed, as I have already shown, to believers. 'If a man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.'[1] 'That we may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.'[2] And were the Old Testament Scriptures referred to, almost endless instances would be forthcoming. Let one, however, suffice. David's sin was put away and forgiven, yet his child was taken from him, and the sword was never to depart from his house—consequences of his sin, though not the penalty.

The employment of strong terms in condemnation of God's people on account of their sins is quite common in His Word. 'Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury; thou hast drunken the bowl of the cup of staggering (or trembling) and drained it.'[3] 'I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, that I should in

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 15. [2] 1 John ii. 28.
[3] Isa. li. 17.

any wise pardon them.'[1] And yet it is written of them, 'Behold, I will gather them out of all the countries whither I have driven them in Mine anger, and in My fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again into this place . . . And they shall be My people, and I will be their God . . . And they shall not depart from me.'[2] Thus we see how surely God's promises will be fulfilled, however rebellious may be those whom He loves, and 'mercy glorieth against judgment.'[3]

But we do not suppose for a moment that the eventual blessing of those who will be rescued from the lake of fire, will be comparable to that of those who are saved in this age—far from it.

They who truly receive Christ in this life are the members of His mystical body, the Church, and will, I judge, constitute the Bride, the Lamb's wife,—will sit with Him on His mediatorial throne, and reign with Him until He shall deliver up the kingdom

[1] Hos. i. 6. [2] Jer. xxxii. 37.
[3] James ii. 13.

to God, even the Father, *i.e.*, after the thousand years are finished, and when all rule and authority and power shall have been subjected to Christ, and every enemy shall have been destroyed, when God shall be all in all. From the above privileges the later born ones will be excluded, to their eternal loss, as it seems to me.

My task is finished; with what measure of success the reader must determine; it will be for him to search the Scriptures, and see how far these things are so, to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

If God graciously deigns to bless to any extent my efforts to help others, I shall be abundantly rewarded. May His holy will and truth alone have place!

The subject of 'The Restitution of All Things,' (Longmans and Co.) has been so fully and ably treated of by my friend, Rev. Andrew Jukes, that I earnestly commend its perusal to any one interested in the subject, as also 'Everlasting Punishment' considered in a letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Glad-

stone, M.P., by the Rev. F. N. Oxenham, M.A. (Rivington, London.)

I remain always faithfully yours in our Lord,

W. T. BERGER.

VILLA TALBOT, CANNES,
ALPES MARITIMES, *June*, 1886.

POSTSCRIPT.

As many Christian friends are not aware that the doctrine of the endlessness of future punishment is not required as an article of faith in the Church of England, it may be well to call their attention to the following facts, for which I am indebted to the Rev. F. N. Oxenham's letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, pp. 89, 90: 'I have in this letter purposely avoided the question, How far, if at all, the formularies of the English Church can be taken to be in favour of the popular theory of everlasting punishment? I have done so for two reasons: first, because I desired to take broader ground in this discussion; and secondly, because I am satisfied, that, if this theory is unsupported either by Scripture or by the voice of the universal Church, it cannot be the intention of the

Church of England to require belief in that theory from any of her members. But as to the intention of the Church of England in this matter, I wish here to make two historical remarks.

'(i.) Among the Articles of Religion drawn up by Cranmer and some other divines in the reign of Edward VI., A.D. 1552, was one, (the forty-second,) which condemned those who hold the opinion that the torments of the lost would at some time come to an end. In Elizabeth's reign, A.D. 1562, these Articles were submitted to the Archbishops and to Convocation. The Primate, on his own authority, struck out this forty-second Article to begin with, and the bishops and clergy in both Houses and of both Provinces agreed. The Articles have been reviewed again more than once since 1562, but neither the Article then struck out, nor any one of similar intent, has ever been again received.[1]

'(ii.) There has been in our day a decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on this particular subject. I am not

[1] Cardwell's 'Synodalia,' vol. i., pp. 34, *et seq.*

of course referring to that decision as having any force whatever to determine the doctrine of the Church of England; but for a different purpose. In the case to which I refer, *i.e.* Fendall *v.* Wilson, 1863-4, Mr. Wilson was charged, among other offences, with denying; (1) the full inspiration of Holy Scripture; (2) the endlessness of future punishment. The Court judged him not guilty on either of these charges; and as to the second charge, their lordships say, "We are not required, or at liberty to express, any opinion upon the mysterious question of the eternity of final punishment, further than to say that we do not find, in the formularies to which this Article refers, any such distinct declaration of our Church upon the subject as to require us to condemn as penal the expression of hope by a clergyman, that even the ultimate pardon of the wicked, who are condemned in the day of judgment, may be consistent with the will of Almighty God." Among the judges who gave this decision were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Their Graces announced that they did not concur

with the judgment so far as it related to the charge touching inspiration. They expressed no dissent from that part of the judgment which bore upon everlasting punishment.'[1]

[1] Brooke's 'Privy Council Judgments,' p. 102.

THE END.

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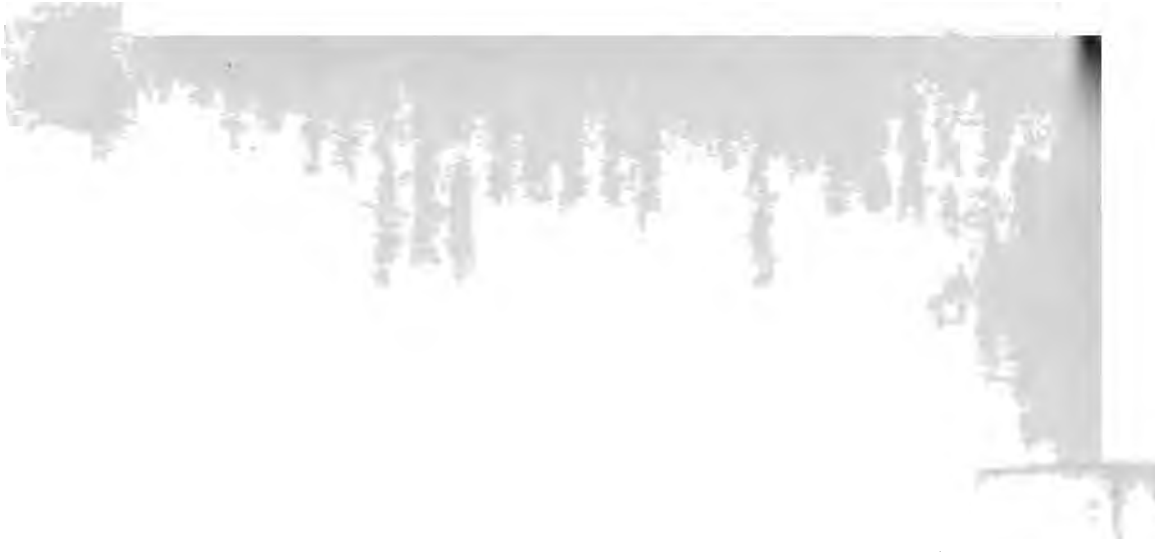

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